RESTORATION REVIEW

The Restoration Mind . . .

RESTORATION AND BAPTISM

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A few of the fellows, both students and faculty, drove Mr. Trueblood back to his hotel, with due propriety for the occasion. Perhaps still chaffing from the encounter, Mr. Trueblood asked his guests to explain precisely what baptism meant to them. The brothers went full circle, with all four or five of of them presenting their understanding of baptism. One said that he saw baptism in reference to the body of Christ, the church, for it is the door into the church. The next brother saw baptism in terms of the remission of sins, quoting Acts 2:38, and explaining that to the penitent believer baptism is the means of forgiveness.

Another brother pointed to baptism as an act of obedience, something that the Lord commands, which the believer is to obey whether or not he understands all its significance. Still another explanation was that baptism is the response of faith, a means of relating oneself to the grace of God.

This account of what the brothers said about baptism is not meant to be precisely accurate, and there was surely more said than what we have narrated, but this fairly represents the variety of the replies that were made, which set the stage for Trueblood's rather intemperate response, Quaker or not. "You fellows can't even agree among yourselves as to the meaning of baptism, for here you are giving all

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We all have our answer to that reaction of course, for a scriptural view of baptism might well incorporate *all* the views presented by the ACC men, and this Mr. Trueblood should have discerned. It is the story of the elephant again, for he is indeed like a wall, a rope, a tree, or a fan, all these, depending on one's perspective at the time. Our brothers

were not contradicting each other on baptism, we would insist, but merely corroborating each other.

But allow me to venture some defense of Mr. Trueblood's protest, however persuasive the foregoing reasoning might be to us. He may not be wholly to blame for his display of impatience. It is altogether understandable that even a Quaker would be vulnerable to intemperance in a confrontation with us Church of Christ folk, for we are often less than kind and generous to our religious neighbors, and much too noisy for Quakers. It is too bad that we have to turn such meetings into some kind of a "shootout." The fellows on the Hill would have done well to have invited Mr. Trueblood to say something about what Quakers are doing around the world for suffering humanity. That would be an eyeopener to a lot of us! Ouida and I share in the work of American Friends Service Committee and we are wonderfully impressed with their deep concern and effective ministry to the deprived masses. I had rather hear Trueblood talk about such as that than about baptism!

But the point of defense is not so much Prof. Trueblood's annoyance with some of our brethren, which we admit to be understandable enough, but rather of his point that our view of baptism is a confused one. Had the professor been well enough acquainted with our history he could have shown that since the time of Campbell-Stone our folk have had different views on baptism, including Campbell and Stone themselves. It is still too little a known fact that the *Firm Foundation* was started back in 1884 by a rebaptism faction, led by Austin McGary who insisted that even immersed Baptists and Methodists had to be rebaptized to be members of the Church of Christ. Commenting on this in his *History of Churches of Christ in Texas*, Steve Eckstein says: "Before McGary raised the issue, churches of Christ generally had accepted all immersed believers into their membership without requiring rebaptism, although there may have been a fundamental difference of opinion regarding the purpose of baptism."

Eckstein"s information about the controversy helps to explain the long standing battle between. Texas and Tennessee preachers back in those days, David Lipscomb of the *Gospel Advocate* on one side and Austin McGary of the *Firm Foundation* on" the other, the after effects of which are still felt today. Now this was not over instrumental music or missionary societies, but over baptism. And Steve Eckstein is right in alluding to a difference of opinion regarding the *purpose* of baptism as the basis of the *Firm Foundation* faction. It supports my thesis that our people have never been of one mind on the subject of baptism, including the purpose of baptism. And yet this is the subject that has concerned us most.

A reading of Belcastro's *The Relationship of Baptism to Church Membership* will inform one of the diverse views on baptism throughout the history of the Restoration Movement. The various confluences of the movement, including the Campbell wing in

Virginia and the Stone segment in Kentucky, were able to unite their efforts without ever agreeing completely on either the purpose or design of baptism.

In his *Biography* Barton Stone tells how he had preached Christ and the scriptures as the only basis of unity, rejecting creeds and party names, long before Campbell and his associates made their appearance. He states that baptism for the remission of sins and weekly communion were at the time of the merger of the two groups the only distinguishing doctrines.

This shows that it was not newly found truths about baptism that ignited the fires of Restoration. I t was rather a desire to be free of party intrigue and to be bound only by Christ and his word. Campbell himself was well into his Restoration labors before he reached his position of immersion for the remission of sins, and the Brush Run congregation, the first of the Campbell movement, was organized and going full steam in an effort to "unite the Christians in all the sects" before any of its members thought of being immersed.

Barton Stone and his fellow ministers, all Presbyterians who resolved to break with sectarians and return to the simplicity of New Testament Christianity, decided that they should be immersed. But there were no immersed ministers who could baptize them except the Baptists, who would not do so unless they joined the Baptists. They decided that even if none of their number was immersed they could immerse one another, which they did. This was in 1804, at which time Alexander Campbell was but a lad of 16 back in Ireland. Even so Stone hardly had the "Church of Christ position" on immersion, for at that time it was mostly the mode of the act that concerned him, having rejected the sprinkling of the Presbyterians. And yet he tells of one experience, when sinners were praying at the mourner's bench, that he arose and quoted Acts 2:38 to them, urging them to do as Peter instructed the people on that day of Pentecost. Then he adds "Into the spirit of the doctrine I was never fully led, until it was revived by Brother Alexander Campbell some years later." He explains that until Campbell came along the pulpits in his wing of the Movement were silent on the subject of immersion, even though most of those in the congregations submitted to the act. Stone's people taught that it was a matter of personal conviction, that those who were immersed were not to despise those that had only been sprinkled.

These facts show that in both currents of the nineteenth century Restoration Movement, the Stone and the Campbell alike, immersion was not the hallmark of the Movement as it later became. Indeed both wings were underway for years and had gained momentum before the subject ever came up for serious consideration, and even then a divergence of viewpoint was tolerated if not encouraged.

It was not for two or three generations in our history that we became so enamored with immersion that we made it a test of fellowship and came actually to preach baptism. Our early leaders, though they were immersionists, did not see the act as an absolute, with some such conclusions that only those immersed are Christians. They saw immersion as the culmination of man's response to the gospel or as "the cultivation of grace," to use Campbell's description, and even as the completion of obedience. But they were hesitant to assign to any external act such significance that it became the one invariable test of one's religion. This attitude did not seem to change until the Movement began to divide and form sects of its own, thus drawing lines of fellowship not only against "the denominations," but against each other as well. And we have seen in the case of the *Firm Foundation* faction that lines were drawn even against fellow immersionists, because the right ones did not immerse them for the right purposes.

All this indicates that if we were influenced at all by our early history, if not by the scriptures, we would hang looser than we do on the subject of baptism. We are slow to learn that one may still be a Christian even if his obedience is not yet as perfect as our own. As Campbell came to see, so we should, that one's being a Christian is determined more by his character, what he loves and does not love than by any external mark, however rooted it may be in scriptural precedent. It is possible to distort what is good and proper by making more of it than was intended.

Back to Trueblood and the fellows at ACC. If they had all related baptism to the remission of sins, quoting Acts 2:38, and let it go at that, the professor would have had less reason to complain. And they would have been more in line with the traditional Church of Christ position, for it is really this point that we have come to make a test of fellowship. Acts 2:38 is our passage, and if one is baptized aright, it is for the remission of sins. And we even insist that one must realize, then and there, that the act is indeed for the remission of sins. Unlike the fellows talking to Trueblood, we hardly take a panoramic view of baptism, making as much of one aspect of it as another.

I fear that this makes our position on baptism a sectarian one, for it elevates one facet of baptism, which scripture treats rather casually, to the level of *sine qua non* of the Christian faith. I say "baptism for the remission of sins" is treated rather casually because it is found only in Peter's response that may never have been given had the people not asked Peter the right question. He certainly was not before them to preach "baptism for the remission of sins." And it is a reference to baptism that was not as appealing to other New Testament writers as were other references.

I have never heard of any of our people insist that one must understand, when he is immersed, that that act puts him "into Christ," and that if he does not understand this he is not scripturally baptized. This view would have more support than the "remission of sins" thing, for Paul says more about the former than Peter does about the latter. And how about

the “seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord” which Acts 3:19 promises us upon obedience? If we started insisting that folk have to realize this blessing in reference to immersion at the time of their obedience, we would have to rebaptize the entire brotherhood.

We say little about being immersed because Jesus was, “to fulfill all righteousness,” but it seems to be a very good reason indeed. Even if it may be a bit on the existential side, the idea of being “baptized into his death” is one to appreciate, but it would be going too far to insist that one comprehend such a blessing if his baptism is valid. Then there is the “baptism of repentance” which is hardly emphasized despite several references to it in scripture, and since it probably refers to “immersion into a changed life” I would that we knew more about it.

There is “baptism in the Holy Spirit” which Jesus promises, which we have somehow dismissed as having any significance. So with the “baptism for the dead” which was practiced in the Corinthian congregation. In all my born days I’ve never known of a single person among us to be immersed for a loved one who has passed on, and yet this was almost certainly a practice in primitive Christianity. The Mormons, who also by the way stress Acts 2:38 in their teaching, are one up on us in that they do immerse for the dead, as did some of the Corinthians. I realize that this does not necessarily mean that either the Mormons or the Corinthians are acting according to God’s will. Unfortunately Paul did not give us that information, but he does reveal to us that some believers got themselves baptized in behalf of dead ones. Paul only wanted to know why they would do this if there is no resurrection.

There are some seven or eight distinct blessings or promises that are associated with immersion. It makes a good question as to why we have come to stress “remission of sins” so absolutely. We neglect even *that* reference, for no one among us has yet insisted that one must realize he receives the Holy Spirit as a gift when he’s immersed!

I have no problem in all this, as our pioneers had no problem, in that I am quite willing to leave it to God to promise what he will and to bless as he will those who believe in Jesus and are immersed. I see baptism as an act of faith, not a discipline in knowledge. One being immersed into Jesus does not have to *know* anything. It is an experience growing out of his *faith* in a person. He does not have to know that in coming into Jesus he is blessed with the indwelling Guest of heaven anymore than he has to know that his act of faith is for the remission of sins. God takes care of all that.

This is the heart of the meaning of restoration. We must not let the Moslems emphasize *submission* (the meaning of *Islam)* anymore than we do. Baptism means that we have submitted ourselves to God’s will through the Christ he gave us. It is this that restores man to God. — *the Editor*

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WHAT I BELIEVE ABOUT SITUATION ETHICS

The position I take in this paper is that in deciding matters of right and wrong, which is what ethics is about, one's decision must take into consideration the circumstances involved or the situation in which the problem is found. This is to say that the right course of action must be decided situationally. Most, if not all, moral problems are solved in part by a reference to *it all depends*, i.e., it all depends on the *situation.* Is it right to deceive? Is it right to kill? Is abortion morally justifiable? Is it right to drive in excess of the speed limit? Is it right to break into your neighbor's house?

To say that responsible moral thinking necessitates a reference to the situation involved is to say that none of these questions, along with hundreds like them, are to be decided arbitrarily. There cannot be a categorical *yes* or *no* to any of them. Deception can be both legal and moral, with both the C.I.A. and God himself as practitioner. Justifiable killing is sometimes merciful as well as moral. Abortion is now legal in some states because it is realized that in certain circumstances abortion is the best solution to the problem. And not only do emergency vehicles break the speed limit, but anyone is within his rights to do so if circumstances demand it. Moreover, it would be wrong *not* to break into your neighbor's house if in doing so you would save his life or avert disaster to his property.

Yet it is readily agreed that all these things would *ordinarily* be wrong. It is the situation that makes the difference. Or better said, it is the *person* in the situation that makes the difference, which means that the view I am defending might better be called "Person-in-the-situation" ethics. This is to say that in any situation that presents a moral problem it is the claim of the person that is greater than the demands of abstract ideas of what is right. Persons are more important than principles. As Jesus said, "The sabbath is made for man, not man for the sabbath."

We have implied that the question of whether speeding is morally right must be answered with *It all depends.* There is in moral thought a concept known as "the principle of necessity," which says that if it is necessary to act contrary to laws that one would ordinarily honor in order to help someone in an emergency situation, then "what is necessary" takes precedence over law. If I come upon you lying beside a road, wounded and dying, it would not only be right for me to break the speed limit in getting you to hospital, but, if necessary, to "borrow" a nearby car in order to meet the emergency. This is why ships at sea, forbidden to enter certain harbors, may enter those harbors in an emergency. It is *persons* that make the difference. Legally speaking, Jesus violated sabbath laws, but it was always for persons that he did so. Even for a beast one might do so for our Lord taught: "Which of you, having an ass or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not immediately pull him out on a sabbath day?"

This raises the question of the nature of right. What do we mean by *right and wrong* anyway? What makes *right* right and *wrong* wrong? Is something right because it conforms to some law of principle and wrong when it violates that law or principle? Is stealing wrong because of the law *Thou shalt not steal.* or did God give that law because stealing is wrong? If there were no law about stealing, would stealing then be right?

Things are right or wrong, I propose, in reference to their effect upon people. Stealing is wrong because it hurts people, usually. Speeding is wrong because it hurts people, usually. Honesty is right because it benefits people, ordinarily. Getting an education is right because it helps people, ordinarily.

Something is right, therefore, to the extent that it proves beneficial to persons, and it is wrong to the extent that it hurts persons. This is why God laid down such rules as *Thou shalt do no murder* and *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* In His infinite wisdom God saw, what man himself comes to see in his own experience, that murder and adultery are an indignity upon man and destructive of his happiness. Murder and adultery are not made wrong by being included in the Ten Commandments, but they are included there because they were already wrong. They were made wrong by the very nature of God's creation of man in honor and dignity. There is no evidence that Cain had heard any such law against murder when he slew his brother Abel. He knew it was wrong by the very situation of being human and being part of a family upon earth.

This view of the nature of right, that it is that which enhances the dignity of man, has its own built-in implications. If it is right for me to speed in order to get you to the hospital because this preserves your dignity as a person, it remains right only if in doing so I am sensitive to the well-being of other persons. I may be justified in going 60 in a 40 mile zone. but not 80. What is right becomes wrong, if in getting you to the hospital I am responsible for the injury or death of a dozen other people or even of one other person. Right is thus determined by the demands of the situation. Gen. Robert E. Lee allowed his freezing Confederate army to gather firewood by sawing the top portion of fence posts from Yankee farms, thus leaving the fences intact. This was morally responsible, because of the welfare of persons, but it may well have been morally irresponsible had he flagrantly destroyed the fences of helpless farmers, because of the welfare of persons.

All this is to say that value is not in abstractions, whether in the form of rules or principles in a book or laws in a constitution. Value lies in what happens to people. This is why the Bible is not to be viewed as inherently good, or any law of man as good *per se.* The Bible has value in that something important happens to people when they are influenced by it. There is, for example, no inherent value in the principle of freedom itself, however much the Bible teaches it. It is only when freedom happens to people that there is value. It is so with all human laws. The authority of a police officer is not a value in itself,

but only as that authority leads to good things happening to people or averting the bad things that might happen.

This is to say that God acts for man in reference to man's situation. God never acts arbitrarily, but meaningfully, in view of what is best for man. This is love, and this is religion, for religion is a love story of what God has done for man. All that God demands of us, all that He has commanded, is an expression of his love. The Bible, therefore, rather than being an arbitrary collection of laws and principles, is a testimony of God's love for man. Its ultimate design is to show how God loves us through Jesus, and to teach us that through him we are to will our neighbor's good.

And here we have the key to situation ethics. In every situation I am to will my neighbor's good. The Bible, through its laws and principles, provides near-absolute guidelines as to how I can best will my neighbor's good. I say "near-absolute" because of the contingency of situations, man's predicament being as varied as it is. The Bible speaks to man in the normal, ordinary pursuits of every day life. It is important, therefore, that we realize that underlying all biblical law is the duty to will my neighbor's good, to love him as myself. The Bible teaches us how to do this most of the time or nearly all the time, but we welcome legalists when we forget that even in the Bible persons come before principles. It is conceivable, therefore, that we would bypass a biblical principle in order to honor the one law that is the basis of all the principles, and this is the law of love. This is what it means to be free, free to do the loving thing, and this is the freedom that Jesus himself practiced.

When the Pharisees criticized his disciples for plucking ears of grain on the sabbath, pointing out that it was unlawful, Jesus did not counter by contending that it was lawful. Rather he said: "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?" As with David so with the disciples, *people were in need,* and in that situation principle yielded to personality. Notice that Jesus goes on to say, drawing upon biblical principle, "If you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath."

I desire mercy and not sacrifice means that in any situation where sacrifice (or keeping of law) interferes with the showing of mercy to people in need, then sacrifice must give way to mercy. Jesus is lord of the sabbath! This does not mean that he ignored the sabbath and all such laws, but that he made them his servant in showing love to man. As fellow heirs with him, you too are made lord over law, not that you are to flout law, but you are to used law in service to yourself and others. Law serves you as you will your neighbor's good. But law is not your master, causing you to neglect mercy in order to fulfill its demand.

God is himself a situationist. While it would ordinarily be wrong for a man knowingly to marry a prostitute and to continue living with her in her harlotry, God instructed one of His prophets to do that very thing. To Hosea the Lord commanded, “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry.” If that shakes you up, then I should not point out that once Hosea had married this bad woman, the Lord told him to turn right around and marry still another harlot!

In *that* situation it was the right thing to do, for in this way God could dramatize, as He could in no other way, the great love He had for His adulterous people.

God also proved to be a situationist in regard to the keeping of the passover in the time of Hezekiah, the reforming king of Judah. Even though it was not celebrated at the legally specified time nor with the proper priestly cleansing, Hezekiah nonetheless urged that Israel and Judah gather in Jerusalem for a great unity meeting and eat the passover together. As is often the case in regard to unity meetings, the well-meaning king was laughed to scorn by many who were invited, and the clergy offered little encouragement. But when the rank and file of God’s people began to gather in Jerusalem from both Israel and Judah and began to tear down false altars and make preparation for restoring the passover, the priests and the Levites were put to shame and proceeded to lend a helping hand even though they were ceremonially unfit to do so. The record says in 2 Chron. 30 that “they ate the passover otherwise than as prescribed.”

That would settle the matter once and for all for the legalistic mind, for it it were “other than as prescribed” it could not possibly be right. But Hezekiah saw it otherwise, believing that what was happening in people’s hearts was the important thing, and so he prayed to the Lord that He would pardon the people and cleanse them, even though the ceremony was not according to the sanctuary’s rules of cleanness. “And the Lord heard Hezekiah, and healed the people.”

That is not all. The restoration of the passover was such a joyous thing to the people that they resolved to keep it for an extra seven days, again going beyond specifications.

The point in this case is not that law is unimportant nor that regulations respecting such things as the passover are inappropriate and therefore to be ignored at will. It is rather that with God form is always to be an expression of substance and subservient to substance. It is the heart that counts with God, with form always serving as a means of reflecting what is in the heart. This has to mean that if in any situation the demands of form, such as ceremonial regulations, interfere with the demands of the heart, it is form that has to yield by either being modified or bypassed altogether.

This is why it is ungracious of us immersionists to interpret the introduction of affusion or sprinkling as some diabolical scheme to displace an ordinance of God, for the first instances of pouring for immersion could have been sincere efforts in abnormal situations to conform as nearly as possible to what God requires in terms of form. And who knows

but what God in those situations would accept what ordinarily would not be acceptable. The scriptures assure us that "Man looks upon the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart."

Situation ethics is illustrated in such untoward circumstances as one human being owning another human being, for it says that even here the *situation* might justify that which is admitted to be both inexpedient and evil. And is there not a difference between something being evil and morally wrong? Slavery was of course an evil institution, but it did not necessarily follow that those involved in perpetuating it were guilty of sin. In the situation in which they found themselves, there may well have been no other morally responsible course of action.

Back in 1845, long before the Civil War, Alexander Campbell in an essay on "Our Position to American Slavery" insisted that "the relation of master and slave is not in itself sinful or immoral," while at the same time recognizing it as an evil system and suggesting ways by which it could eventually be eradicated. Campbell was of course criticized for this position, a position that was indirectly responsible for his being imprisoned while visiting in Glasgow years later.

But let's look at the situation in 1845. If a master freed his slaves, he was required by law not only to provide a living for them, but he was also responsible for all their conduct, being liable for any crimes they might commit. It would also place the freed slave in a precarious position, turned loose in a society unprepared for such a thing. It would have also threatened the economic stability of the country, imperiling the blacks and the whites alike.

This is why Campbell concluded that it is morally right, *in this situation* for the system of slavery to continue for the moment. But he insisted that the nation should appoint a date after which all children born in slavery would become free, so that in due time slavery would be eradicated in a way appropriate to the demands of civil society. In the meantime the Christian master is to love his slave, provide well for him, and educate him morally and spiritually.

War is like slavery in that it is a social evil, and sometimes a necessary evil. But this is not to say that participation in it is a sin. The situation that calls for one nation taking up arms against another may be such that the morally right thing to do is for a man to take life that he would not take under any other circumstance. Quite obviously it is the situation that makes the difference.

Wise old Socrates was a situationist in weighing moral action in that he associated *right* with conduct appropriate to the circumstance. What is right in one instance or with one person quite clearly might not be for the next person, or even the same person might be right in doing something in one instance but wrong in doing that same thing in a different circumstance. All values, Socrates believed, are what they are in view of their

appropriateness. Gold is beautiful on the arm of a lovely woman, but less than beautiful on a swine's snout. So to be beautiful gold must be appropriately displayed. This is why he saw no beauty when he looked upon the Parthenon, adorned with gold facings, since it was in adoration of gods more immoral than the men who worshipped them. With Socrates, therefore, the situationist sees right conduct as that which is appropriate to the situation, appropriateness depending on what enhances the dignity of man as a creature of God. And this is where the commandments of God come in, for they show us what is appropriate in our dealing with one another. It is evident enough, we now presume, that the commandments, which were hardly calculated to anticipate every possible circumstance of life, must be applied situationally.

So whether it is killing, kissing, or karate, right or wrong depends on the situation. When killing is inappropriate it is murder and of course wrong. And there are different kinds of kisses and for different purposes. It may sometimes be inappropriate for a man to kiss his own wife. When the school kids ask about whether they should kiss on dates, I like to ask what kind of a kiss they are talking about? People kiss their hand, their dog, their grandmother, their baby. So kissing is neither right or wrong *per se*. It depends on the situation.

This means that a controversial practice like abortion can be judged right or wrong only situationally. It could, conceivably, be murder. Or it could be, and often is, an act of mercy, the only answer to an impossible situation.

This reminds us that doing the right thing is not always an easy "black or white" matter. Most decisions, unfortunately, have to be made out in the gray somewhere. They are choices between evils, leaving us obligated to choose the lesser of the evils. It is not a question as to whether abortion is an evil, but whether it is not, like heart surgery, the least of the evil options open to us.

I have said little about sex, and it is here that the situationist is considered most vulnerable. It is supposed that if one judges sexual relations situationally, this gives license to all that the carnal mind hopes for. But how else can sexual relations be judge except situationally? Sex is not appropriate between persons just because they are married, just as eating is not appropriate only because one has an appetite. It is the legalist who is vulnerable regarding sex ethics as he is in all ethics. Judging situationally, a young lady will not only choose not to sleep with a boy, she'll choose not even to keep company with him. Not only will she not dance, she'll not park!

College girls have a special name for a certain type legalist - *hypocritical virgins.* These are the girls that will do anything except commit the act itself, including spending the night with a boy. This illustrates the price of legalism. If one can deceive without actually speaking an untruth, it is adjudged morally right. If one can avoid an equitable tax

by some loophole in the law, this too is right. If one avoids the specific act of adultery itself, then he is not guilty.

The situationist is more discriminating and as a consequence his decisions are sometimes difficult to make. I recall a case of a girl who was due to graduate from Texas Woman's University. A job awaited her. Her parents, now both old and ill, were in need of her support after having helped her for so long. But she could not graduate, I learned, due to scoring too low a grade in one of my courses. Her record revealed that she fell short by only a few points of scoring the C that she had to have to graduate that year. She was a student who had applied herself and who was improving in handling material difficult for her. In her case I did something I do not recall ever doing before, something I consider to be academically irresponsible as a rule. A few points cannot be all that important, I figured, so I recalled my grade sheet and raised her grade by reshuffling the criteria I had used, which caused several others to get higher grades also. It was a *situational* decision.

And yet the instances have been legion in which students have pled for a higher grade for this or that reason, all in vain, lest I lose my academic self-respect. "You should have become concerned about your grade a little sooner, don't you think?" I usually say to these kids that want something without working for it, "I don't change grades unless a mistake has been made." I don't *most of the time,* that is!

There is a grave moral risk in suggesting that adultery may sometimes be all right, that *Thou shalt not commit adultery* "usually" applies. And yet my position implies this or seems to, doesn't it? Yet I am not sure I am saying this, for I am at a loss to think of *adultery* as ever right. It is like thinking of murder as right. I can think of *killing* as sometimes right, but that is not murder: Murder is already wrong in that it is *unjustifiable* killing. Just so I can conceive of sexual intercourse outside wedlock as justifiable, but this would not be adultery.

We all agree that the woman who is raped, which is sexual intercourse outside marriage, is not guilty of adultery. This is because it was not her will, that she was forced. St. Augustine is more particular here than most of us, for he raises the question as to whether the woman *enjoyed* the act, whether it might have *become* her will even though her will did not initiate it. The question is not so easy after all, *just what is adultery?* Is the woman forced by impossible financial circumstances into prostitution an adulteress, while one forced physically is not? A woman who is starving for food may give her body for the sake of survival without giving her will. Is this adultery? Jesus must have had good reasons for being not so judgmental of prostitutes. He thought they might make it into the kingdom ahead of the Pharisees who so readily condemned them. It wasn't that he in any sense approved of the prostitute's way of life, but simply that he made a difference in the judgment of people, in view of the situation.

Many are the examples regarding sexual transgressions in the discussion of situation ethics. The C.I.A. asks a woman to give her body in an espionage plot, just as the army asks her brother to kill his fellow man on the battlefield. If one, why not the other? A German woman in a Russian prison gets herself pregnant so that she might be released and returned to her family and sick husband. A couple decides to go on and live as husband and wife secretly rather than risk all the attending evils, including disinheritance from unreasonable parents should they go on and get married.

The situationist does not suppose he has ready answers for all such problems. He only says that a difference has to be made in our judgments, based on the individual situation. He asks for a less arbitrary and dogmatic interpretation of what we label as sin. What is lying? Did Tom Sawyer really lie when he took the blame in place of Becky Thatcher? If so, was it different from ordinary lies and should it not be judged accordingly? Was Doc Thatcher right when he referred to what Tom did as "a noble and glorious lie." What is stealing? Is a man really stealing when he takes milk for a starving child? What is adultery? And on and on it goes.

What I believe about situation ethics is that no moral decision is truly ethical if it is not made in view of the situation. For a decision to be moral it must consider what helps or hurts people, and this requires a close look at the circumstances involved. As Jude 23 instructs, the situationist learns to *make a difference* in looking at people and their problems.

"Some of these men you can feel pity and you can treat them differently. Others you must try and save by fear, snatching them as it were out of the fire while hating the very garment their deeds have befouled." — *the Editor*

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VOLUME FOR 1972

We will continue with the theme *The Restoration Mind* throughout 1972, which will then, along with the issues for *1971*, be bound in a hardback edition matching the five previously bound volumes. There will be but 500 of these, so you should place your order with us now, though you should send no money since we are not sure of the exact price.

Though the theme remains the same the subjects treated will be different. We plan a series of articles on "The Travel Letters of Alexander Campbell," for it is in these letters that we have some of the most important thinking of the Sage of Bethany. These are his correspondence en route, written from Richmond or Augusta or New Orleans or New York, to be published in his publication for general reading or to his loved ones back home. In these he comments on everything from the weather and architecture to slavery

and politics, along with accounts of the people he meets and the many novel experiences he has. One of the most travelled men of his time, he writes of his experience on horseback, stage coach, steam boat, and railroad. He was a gentleman in broadcloth, moving across frontier America, respected and feared wherever he journeyed.

His letters while traveling tell of a Campbell that is different from the one who wrote weighty theological and educational essays. Here he reveals his preferences and prejudices about many facets of life, giving his views on everything from how to build a meetinghouse to how to handle the slavery problem. Wined and dined as he was by the most substantial families of north, south and west, his letters about the people, their homes and their way of life makes for interesting reading from the point of view of Americana if for no other. But the vital resource of these letters that we shall consider most of all is what they reveal about Campbell's restoration mind. It is while "out amongst them" where practice gained ascendency over theory that Campbell comes up with his liveliest ideas. Too, he seldom wrote his sermons, so we know little about the thousands of messages he delivered during his lifetime of travels. But in these letters he comments upon what he said at various places, revealing some of his innermost thoughts about the pressing issues of the day, which are relevant to our own problems.

You will be amazed at his stamina and fortitude amidst the perils of travel in the American wilderness. Gone from home months at a time, he is often ill, frequently shut out of church buildings and left to preach in the open air nearby, and usually vilified by the clergy before his arrival in a given locality, and all this at his own expense. One is left not only to marvel at his experiences, but also to wonder what motivation drove him to such sacrifices.

We believe these travel letters will reveal to you the real Alexander Campbell, the man at his best, out where he did his greatest work — among the people that had read his writings or had heard of his strange teachings.

Another series in the new volume will be "Highlights in the History of the Restoration Movement," which should also give us a more enlightened Restoration mind. We will start by showing that Restoration has been an ideal almost from the beginning of Christian history and that there have been numerous Restoration efforts antecedents to the Stone-Campbell movement in this country. The European influences on young Alexander Campbell will also be considered. But mostly we shall be concerned with what happened here in our own country in terms of men and events. We want you to know more about what happened in America before the Campbells immigrated, as well as the significance of Barton Stone, Walter Scott, and Isaac Errett. Then there is Cane Ridge, Brush Run, and Lexington, places pregnant with significance in our great history.

This will take much of our allotted space for the next ten issues, but we still hope to share with you some of our own travel experiences in terms of what is happening among some of the concerned ones. We have numerous essays submitted to us by others, many of them with merit, and we hope to find space for some of these as well.

We are a nation of differences, and the values and principles that protect those differences are the sources of a unity far more lasting and stronger than any contrived harmony could be. — *Lyndon B. Johnson*

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READERS' EXCHANGE

MINI-MEETINGS

We are taking time out from the mini-meeting trail, staying home from Thanksgiving through January, in hopes of getting some time in with the family and catching up with our publication of *Restoration Review.* Changing printers from Dallas to Denton has made us even later, but the change will not only be more economical but also enable us to catch up within the next few months.

We did have assignments at the Harford Forum in Illinois and Tulsa, Oklahoma in December, but since we combined that with a family vacation it counts as time off. In January I slipped away to the Preachers' Workshop in Abilene, but since Carl Ketcherside flew to Dallas and went along with me I can only count that happy vacation time, for I enjoy him so much. I may tell something of the Workshop in a forthcoming issue.

Any notice of our meetings in Texas and Illinois in February will not reach anyone in time to be of any value. The following notices, beginning in March, are the only confirmed dates. Others that are now only tentative will be included later. You are invited to contact the party concerned if you are interested in attending.

Montgomery, Alabama, March 3-5. Dallas Burdette, 2428 Elsmeade Dr.

Nacogdoches, Texas, March 10-12. Bob Williams, 210 Wettermark. Phone 713-564-2753.

Lufkin, Texas, March 13-14. Burdis and Rosemary Blackstock, 1104 McGregor.

Austin, Texas, week of March 24-29. Ivan Jameson, 3215 Cupid Dr. Phone 512-892-0471.

Murfreesboro, Tennessee, April 4-9 . Dr. Norman Parks, Middle Tennessee State U.

Milligan College, Tennessee, April 13-14. Dr. Robert Fife, Milligan College.

RESPONSE FROM READERS

I have only recently started reading your stuff and I find it exceedingly enlightening. It is especially so to one held down by the weight of legalism. - *W.* C. *Livaudais, 4900 Bundy Rd., New Orleans 70127*

Your October issue came and I couldn't rest until I had read it completely. You *are* rich, Leroy — not only in the blessings God has given you materially, but in your literary ability as well as your family. And if you write an autobiography, please put me down as receiving a "first edition" copy. I wouldn't miss it for anything. I "teared" a bit and laughed a lot at your article. God bless you and keep you and bring you here safely. — *Virginia Adams, 12032 S. 70th, Palos Heights, Illinois 60463*

Your personal testimony, *The Lord Hath Made Me Rich,* was superb! I haven't read a book or article in recent years so interesting. It was factual, intriguing and cleverly composed. No wonder we long to have you in our midst again. Your real-life stories and down-to-earth manner make us love you so much. We agree that your good fortune was not accidental. You were pliable in His hand and He blessed you accordingly. — *Raymond and Marjarie Stephens,* 3613 *Smart, Kansas City* 64124

I hope you will someday develop the attribute of honesty in your character where your unity efforts are concerned. Admit that your effort is not free of sectarianism, partyism, cliques, and a thing called just plain hate. Confess it, Leroy, it'll be good for your soul and you can make a better fight of things. An honest fight' I don't love everybody in the church, and the sooner I became honest with myself and with God the more true success I had in the Christian life. — *Russell Bonneau, 1679 Everglades Dr., Milpitas, Ca. 95935*

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